
CIRM TO INITIATE PUBLIC SESSIONS ON GUIDELINES FOR STEM CELL RESEARCH Additional Advice Sought from Public Goes beyond Traditional APA Process

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EMERYVILLE, CA – Next week, the California Institute for Regenerative Medicine (CIRM) will host the first of three public sessions specifically intended to seek the public's opinion on the medical, ethical, and scientific issues governing stem cell research funded by the state agency. The first of these will take place on Wednesday, August 31, 2005 10 AM – 2 PM at the Los Angeles Public Library, 630 West 5th Street, Meeting Room A.

Subsequent sessions will be held in San Francisco on September 27th, followed by another in Sacramento on a date to be determined. The public sessions, led by members of the Independent Citizens' Oversight Committee (ICOC) and the Scientific and Medical Accountability Standards Working Group (Standards Working Group), invite public input beyond what is required by the Administrative Procedure Act (APA), the regulation-making process for California. These voluntary and informal discussions mark a concerted effort to incorporate the public's advice on the agency's ethical guidelines before the formal regulation-making process officially begins.

"CIRM intends to carry out its research according to the highest ethical standards," said Interim President Zach Hall, Ph.D. "As we formulate our policies, we need the advice of the public and all interested parties in ensure that we have broad consensus on the best possible results."

Background

The CIRM draft guidelines are based on the Guidelines for Human Embryonic Stem Cell Research, published by the National Academies of Science in May 2005. They have been adapted in regulatory form to comply with the California Stem Cell Research and Cures Act. At the meeting on August 30th, the Standards Working Group will consider the guidelines in adapted form to recommend to the ICOC as the interim standards for research funded by the CIRM. Over the next several months, the Standards Working Group will consider whether the interim standards should be amended before adoption as permanent standards. The public sessions are the first step in this process of discussion and evaluation, during which time the CIRM will accept the public's written and oral comment on the guidelines. The public may also submit written comment by email to guidelines@cirm.ca.gov.

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